



PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FACT SHEET

PREREQUISITE & RECOMMENDED COURSES

Pre-OT students should research schools carefully to be aware of all prerequisite courses and other admissions policies, as prerequisites vary among OT programs. Students should meet with a Pre-Health Advisor in their freshman year to develop their timeline for application to OT school.

PREREQUISITES FOR OT SCHOOL

The following courses are commonly required by OT schools. Some courses, although not specifically required for an OT program, may be required to take upper-level courses, such as anatomy and physiology, at Creighton:

- General Biology I w/ Lab - 4 hours - BIO 201/205
- General Chemistry I w/ Lab - 4 hours - CHM 203/204
- Anatomy* - 3 hours - EXS 111 (only accepted by Creighton), EXS 331 or PHA 310
- Physiology* - 3 hours - EXS 320 or BIO 449
- Statistics - 3 hours - Many options
- Psychology - 6 hours - required courses vary; typically General, Abnormal, and/or Lifespan/Developmental
- English - 3 hours - ENG 15X
- Medical Terminology - 1 hour - OTD 215

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Creighton's OT program requires students to have 6 hours of Theology (often completed via the Magis Core Christian Tradition and Biblical Tradition).
- Creighton's OT program does not require a physiology class, nor does it require a lab with anatomy. However, a number of programs require both anatomy and physiology to be completed with labs.
- Some schools may not regard credit earned through examinations (AP/CLEP/IB) as being equivalent to completing required courses, but they may accept higher-level college courses as substitutes. Research individual schools for their policies regarding AP/CLEP/IB credits for prerequisite courses.

CO-CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS

SHADOWING

Students must gain knowledge of the profession by shadowing current professionals in their field. Students should shadow occupational therapists in a variety of settings, if possible. Sustained shadowing with one OT is also helpful, as some schools may require a letter of recommendation from a practicing OT. Additionally, OT programs often require applicants to have documentation of a minimum number of shadowing hours. Research individual schools to understand the expectations about the number of hours and the settings in which shadowing is completed.

VOLUNTEER & SERVICE

It is important to demonstrate sustained commitment over time. Students should have service experiences in healthcare and non-healthcare settings. Check out the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice for opportunities: blogs.creighton.edu/ccsj

LEADERSHIP & TEAMWORK

Students must demonstrate leadership and interpersonal skills. Consider initiating group projects, serving as an officer in a student organization, or working as a teaching assistant. Students must also demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively.

HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

Students should seek opportunities for hands-on, direct patient care experience. Although this may be gained through volunteering, students can also gain this kind of experience through employment as a PT/OT Tech, Certified Nurse Assistant, EMT with Basic certification, rehabilitation aide, among others.

RESEARCH

Research experience is not required for admission to OT school, but may add an extra layer to an application if research is of particular interest to the student. See the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship for opportunities: www.creighton.edu/curas.

BECOMING A COMPETITIVE APPLICANT

Applicants to occupational therapy programs must complete a minimum of 60 credit hours (two years) of college coursework that includes pre-OT prerequisites. Some students choose to complete a bachelor's degree prior to entering an OT program. Competitive applicants for admission have solid academic records, well-rounded profiles of co-curricular experiences, supportive letters of recommendation, and can clearly articulate their reasons for pursuing OT as a profession.

SELECTING A MAJOR

Although a bachelor's degree is not required for admission to OT school, students should always be on track towards a degree. Ideally, a major should be based on student interests and should support an alternate career in the event that plans, goals or interests change. OT schools look for students who demonstrate the ability to handle a rigorous course load.

GRADES & GPA

C is an honorable grade. However, grades below B, especially within the two academic years leading up to OT school application, could interfere with admission. Faced with a likely grade below C, some students should withdraw (W) and later try for a higher grade. Students should consult with advisors as they decide. More than two W's could indicate a lack of judgment or an inability to handle challenges in OT school.

GPA's calculated on OT school applications include coursework done at all colleges attended and all attempts at a course.

Aim for GPA's of 3.3 or above.

CREIGHTON PRE-HEALTH RESOURCES

Pre-Health Advisors in the Center for Advising Resources & Support are available to meet with students individually about their pre-health goals and path.

The Pre-Professional Communities assist students in exploring the OT profession, gaining experience in healthcare, and preparing for the application process. Students should participate in POPT 100 in their freshman year and POPT 200 in their sophomore year (depending on the student's application timeline).

COURSE SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS

Freshmen and sophomores usually take only two natural science or math subjects each semester.

Biology: General Biology I (BIO 201/205) is a typical choice for freshman fall, as it can prepare students for Anatomy and Physiology. General Biology II (BIO 202/206) is a typical choice for freshman spring. However, some pre-OT students may not need to complete General Biology II and should consult with a Pre-Health Advisor. Completion of either General Chemistry I (CHM 203) with a grade of "C" or better or Introductory Chemistry (CHM 105) with a grade of "B" or better is required in order to take General Biology II.

Chemistry: General Chemistry I (CHM 203/204) may be needed to enroll in the Anatomy and Physiology courses required by many OT programs. Students should consult with a Pre-Health Advisor about the necessity of Chemistry for their particular situation. To be eligible to take General Chemistry in the freshman year, students must achieve a sufficient score on the Quantitative Assessment for New Students (QANS). Students who do not achieve a sufficient QANS score will need to complete an introductory chemistry course, CHM 105, with a grade of "C" or better to progress to CHM 203.

Physics: A small number of OT schools may require a semester of physics. Students who have sufficient math and physics (a year of high school physics or a semester of college introductory physics, math through pre-calculus) are eligible to take General Physics I (PHY 201/205).

Math: MTH 205 is often the best choice for pre-OT students. However, students who are applying to OT programs that require Physics will need pre-calculus algebra and trigonometry knowledge to prepare for General Physics I (PHY 201/205).

Sample First Semester Schedule

Course sequencing may vary depending on a student's readiness

- General Biology I w/ Lab (4 hours)
- General Psychology (3 hours)
- Magis Core Class (3 or 4 hours) - ENG or Critical Issues & COM 101
- Magis Core Class (3 hours) - PHL or THL
- Maybe another Magis Core Class (3 hours) - Foreign Language
- RSP Class (.5 hours)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

ADMISSION TESTS

Some OT programs require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), a national, standardized, computer-based test. The GRE is typically taken 12-15 months before starting OT school. To do well on this exam, students must allow sufficient time for study and preparation.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE (OTCAS)

Students apply to OT programs using OTCAS. Students submit information that is transmitted to all schools they are applying to, as well as program-specific materials that goes to individual programs. OTCAS opens annually in mid-July for the new application cycle.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Students are required to submit at least three letters of recommendation with their application. Many OT schools require at least one letter from a professor. Some schools may require one letter from a practicing occupational therapist. Research individual schools for letter requirements.

INTERVIEWS

Many OT programs interview promising applicants. The John P. Fahey Career Center offers interview preparation assistance, including mock interviews.

PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY GROUPS & RESOURCES

PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CLUB

All pre-OT students should participate in the Pre-Occupational Therapy Club. This student organization provides leadership opportunities to further explore and gain experience in the OT profession. Learn more on CU Involved: <https://cuinvolved.creighton.edu/organization/pre-ot>

CU SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Make an appointment with SPAHP admissions office personnel in the spring of the year applying to personalize the application process.

CREIGHTON PREFERENCE

The Creighton Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program gives preferential admission consideration to Creighton undergraduate students who complete all prerequisite coursework at Creighton. Students who fully participate in POPT 100 and POPT 200 and have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 are guaranteed an interview.

HELPFUL LINKS

- CU SPAHP | creighton.edu/pharmacy-ot-pt
- American Occupational Therapy Association | aota.org
- Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service | otcas.liasoncas.com